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The Advocate Sport



Battle royale
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SET TO CLASH IN
GRAND FINAL
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Challenge on

COFFS Harbour athlete Richard Pearson has thrown down the gauntlet to marathon man Steve Moneghetti.

The local distance champion will challenge the international running superstar in the half-marathon at next weekend's Coffs Coast Running Festival.

Moneghetti has been granted the No.1 bib to signify his standing in athletics.

So Pearson has humbly requested he be allowed to wear No.2.

"I finished second to him in 2011 and was two minutes behind, but last year we ran the same time," Pearson said.

"While I haven't been training as much for a race like this specifically, Steve is getting older and needs to go faster if he is to beat me this time.

"I don't know for sure what his training has been like lately, but I believe it's time he got some pressure to find out.

"Let's see what our legs bring on

Pearson ready to test 'Monners' after two months US training

the day and may the best man win."

The challenge will add plenty of spice to what is already shaping as Moneghetti's toughest test in many years.

Pearson and fellow runner Dan Stein will top off their preparations in tomorrow's first club triathlon of the season around the Coffs Jetty area.

The pair have spent two months in North America training and competing at high altitude, with Stein winning four triathlon events and Pearson two.

Moneghetti will arrive with his family early in the week to top off his training schedule.

Event director Mick Maley said almost 750 entries had already been received with the final cut-off for entries 5pm this Friday at www.villagesports.com.au

[villagesports.com.au](http://www.villagesports.com.au)

Late entries will be taken only on Saturday afternoon at the Coffs Showground from 2pm with a \$10 fee on top of the race entry.

"There will be no late entries taken on Sunday morning this year as it becomes too complicated," Maley said.

"Unfortunately, that's a price we have to pay because of the ongoing success of the festival.

"Anybody can enter as all events can be run or walked at your own pace.

"It's fantastic to have 'Monners' in town again but we're thrilled that Richard is going to go out hard to try to upstage him.

"If he does manage to knock off the king, it's going to make big headlines in the running world."



CHALLENGER: Coffs athlete Richard Pearson is at the ready. PHOTO: ROB WRIGHT